



NEWS RELEASE OC 37-11
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 29, 2011

Lakeport Courthouse Design Process Begins

SAN FRANCISCO—Acquisition of the future site of the new Lakeport Courthouse, 6 acres at 675 Lakeport Boulevard, is now complete, and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) has begun architectural design of the courthouse. The award-winning architecture firm of Mark Cavagnero Associates will design the building. The initial phase of architectural design, preliminary plans, is expected to take 9 to 12 months.

The building will have two stories and a basement and will house four courtrooms in approximately 50,000 square feet. The courthouse's design will be consistent with statewide courthouse design standards, whose design excellence principles include responsiveness "to local context, geography, climate, culture, and history", so that courthouses "improve and enrich the sites and communities in which they are located."

The AOC is exploring placement options for the building with the architect, the court, and the project advisory group to optimize access and functionality while minimizing the obstruction of views from Vista Point, in keeping with the city's "cone of vision" easement on the property. Locating the building at the north end of the site is currently the option preferred by the court and the AOC, as thus far, it appears to provide the most appropriate access both for the public and for secure transport of in-custody defendants, accommodate required setbacks, involve the least site work, and provide visibility and prominence at the gateway to town from the freeway. Architectural design is still in its earliest stages, however, and building placement options will be further explored and refined.

The building's appearance has yet to be designed. It will be in keeping with the courthouse's functional importance and its symbolic representation of the dignity of the law and the stability of the judicial system. When architectural design is further along, the AOC and the court plan to enable the public to view the design.

Mark Cavagnero Associates, based in San Francisco, was founded in 1988 and has a wide range of civic, cultural, and educational experience. Winner of the 2010 Distinguished Practice Award from the American Institute of Architects, California Council, the firm has designed courthouses in San Francisco and for the AOC in Mammoth Lakes, along with numerous other civic buildings in Northern California.

The AOC is not considering an alternate property for the courthouse at this time. The site acquisition process, which began in mid-2009, evaluated 36 separate sites in and around downtown Lakeport, including the Vista Point Shopping Center. The project advisory group, which includes

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community leaders from the city and county, determined that two sites met the most important criteria for the courthouse. With the advisory group's input, the AOC took those sites to the State Public Works Board for approval. The community provided input during the public process of evaluation required under CEQA, including discussion at a public meeting in September 2010, and the site on Lakeport Boulevard was chosen.

Construction is currently scheduled to begin in fall 2012 and be completed in 2014. The project is funded by Senate Bill 1407, which finances critically needed courthouse construction, renovation, and repair through a portion of judicial branch fees, fines, and penalties, with no impact on the state's General Fund. The AOC and the court are working to maintain the schedule to ensure that the project moves into construction as soon as possible, providing job opportunities for local subcontractors and suppliers.

More information about the project is available on the California Courts website at www.courts.ca.gov/2798.htm.

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